

In the Specification:

Please substitute the paragraph beginning page 13, line 1 with the following:

The reinforcement can be of any shape or material and formed by any means known in the art. However, as stated earlier, the reinforcement should not alter the electrical pathways contemplated by the chip designers. For example, as shown in figure 3, the reinforcement could be on only one side, 50 (top) or 55 (bottom) of the current level (n level) metallization 95 or the reinforcement could be on both sides 50 and 55 of the current level metallization 95. Also, as shown in figure 3 the reinforcement could contact higher (n + 1) 60 and/or lower (n-1) 65 levels of metallization to enhance support. The instant invention is not restricted to reinforcements that contact higher and/or lower levels of metallization. Additionally, the instant invention is not restricted to a specific design. For example, the reinforcement could be any of the shapes shown in figures 5a-c, which show different shapes for the reinforcement. In each of figures 5a - 5c, the current level metallization (level n), 100 a-c, has a reinforcement at the anode end, 105 a-c respectively, that lies between the current level metal and the prior level metallization 110 (a-c). The inventors contemplate many different shapes that would also be feasible and do not mean the scope of the invention to be restricted to the shapes shown in figure 5. As can be seen from figure 5c it is not necessary that the reinforcement, 105c, contact any of the metallization of the preceding layers, it may terminate in the dielectric, 130. It is not necessary that the reinforcement maximize or optimize the stress driven backflow. It is only necessary that the stress driven backflow be sufficient to reduce J_{em} such that the lack of stress driven backflow is not the significant cause of electromigration failure. Additionally, as shown in figures 5a - 5c, reinforcement may also be placed in the next level of dielectric, 120(a-c). The reinforcements 115 a-c in the next level (n+1) dielectric 130 a-c, are in the proximity of the anode end 102 (a-c) of the current level(n) metal interconnect. Reinforcements 115 a-c are independent of reinforcements 105 a-c. This invention contemplates that either one or both reinforcements 105 or 115 will be used.